



CITY OF ST. MARYS

418 OSBORNE STREET
ST. MARYS, GEORGIA 31558

St. Marys Convention and Visitors Bureau
St. Marys Welcome Center, Ward Hernandez Building
400 Osborne Street
Minutes: **May 23, 2023**, 3:30 p.m.

- I. Called to Order by Darlene Landreth at 3:33 p.m.
- II. A quorum was confirmed. In attendance: Allen Rassi, Valerie Fautz, Darlene Landreth, Tyler Carpenter, Mardja Gray, Judy Thurner, Sugar Yadav (by phone). Staff, Angela Wigger
- III.
 1. Approval of the April 2023 Meeting Minutes
Motion to Approve the Minutes by Valerie Fautz. Seconded by Tyler Carpenter. No discussion.
APPROVED.
 2. Approval of the April 2023 Work Session Minutes
Motion to Approve the Minutes by Tyler Carpenter. Seconded by Mardja Gray. No discussion.
APPROVED.
- IV. Granting Audience to the Public (any speakers should provide name and address) – Misti Kline read a prepared statement, which was included in the packet and is attached at the end of this document. Darlene thanked Misti and noted that this was granting audience to the public and that there should be no discussion taking place but that we could put it forward on the next agenda. Angela thanked her for bringing her comments today and stated she was not aware there were any questions or concerns that had been raised that she had not addressed and that we will take a further look at her comments.
- V. Approval of the Agenda
Motion to Approve the Agenda by Mardja Gray. Seconded by Judy Thurner.
APPROVED
- VI. Other Business
 1. Cumberland Island Update – CUIS Staff – No staff in person update. The final speaker series is coming up June 17th at 2pm. If any park updates are sent Angela will forward them to the board.
- VII. Old Business
 1. Budget Updates FY2024, Public Budget Hearings - Angela Wigger (6/5 & 6/19) – Just updating the board that these are the budget hearing dates. The hearings occur prior to city council meetings. Deborah Walker-Reed will send the times on the upcoming agendas.
 2. Meeting Update: Angela did not attend the Destination Leadership training in Madison as it was full. She will watch for future locations and shift when one is available.
 3. Cedar Oak by Brham Globe Event – Candace and Angela recently attended this event hosted by Bhavook Tripathi. It was a meet & greet and tasting event. For rumor control, he has not purchased the 401 West restaurant building, but he has made offers. He has made an offer that looks like it may go through on the Osprey Cove Golf Course & Clubhouse, which also includes lots and property in Cumberland Harbor. He is working with the Blount brothers on details. Will update any news as we get it.

4. Spencer House Updates (B&B Board Position & Bed Tax) – Angela reported that Jane Alexander has stated that she wants to be on the board to represent Spencer House and that they were not aware the taxes were not paid and would check into it. She indicated they thought the \$5 fee was the tax.

VIII. New Business

1. Meeting Update: GACVB Leadership Roundtable (Governor’s Office of Planning & Budget, \$150 million Hotel Relief Program) – Angela Wigger attended the meeting where the roll out of the relief program was announced. She contacted each property to let them know there was a webinar the next morning and the application process opened the following week.

2. CGI Digital Video – lifestyle, business, tourism - Angela Wigger shared that she and Candace Pullum attended a zoom meeting with CGI at the recommendation of Councilmember Lisa James. We are very excited with the opportunity as they film four videos and they are free. We will be looking into further details but she expects they will move forward and get a video to use for tourism out of the program.

3. Business & Event Updates – Angela Wigger (Lady Bug Bakery and any others) – The Open House for The Bug & Bean – Bakery, Café & Coffee Shop on Friday, June 2nd. Ashely Hulett was a market vendor that left the market to open a brick & mortar business. Independence Day Festival planning is in full swing. May Music in the Park was well attended with around 350 people for The Divebombers, Hello Summer Festival and the Fishing Classic is coming up June 3rd and Amanda Hammann shared they expect about 70 total vendors with the last minute vendors that will still register. There is a 9am parade. Angela is working with her on pushing out the info via newsletter and social media. Whiskey Heart will be playing June 10th, and again Sunn M’Cheaux is June 17th. Juneteenth Festival is Monday 6/19 and also includes a short parade.

4. Director requests a motion to approve expenditure of any bed tax revenue over the anticipated budgeted amount on marketing should it be needed to meet our spending requirements. We are currently at 91% of budgeted revenue with two months left to report. Motion to approve by Tyler Carpenter. Motion Seconded by Valerie Fautz.

APPROVED.

5. Board Training Topics & Dates Provided by City Clerk – Angela Wigger reminded all that she has forwarded the training dates that fall from June 6-29 to them for their consideration. If interested, they can sign up directly with Deborah Walker-Reed.

IX. FY2023 Hotel/Motel Tax & FY2023 St. Marys Financials Review – Angela Wigger shared we are at 91% of total budgeted revenue and 81% of budgeted expenditures. Bed tax is at \$232,000 and we are due one more county payment that should arrive in June.

X. Director’s Report/ Other/Marketing – Angela Wigger shared that LRC Company is coming for a media trip in a few weeks. We will host for a Cumberland visit and tour of St. Marys, as well as dinner one night during the stay. This has been a great partnership over 71 billion digital impressions and 2.9 million print impressions for articles. That is an estimated digital value of \$662 million and print value of \$32,000 if we would have had to pay for those impressions. Will be attending the public meetings and am submitting print and digital ads and advertorial materials that are due over the next month.

XI. Adjournment:

Motion to Adjourn by Judy Thurner. Seconded by Valerie Fautz.

Minutes by Angela Wigger

Copy of letter read by Misti Kline for meeting minutes:

St. Marys Community Market

Hello, my name is Misty Kline. I live at 110 W. Dillingham Street, and I have been a market vendor for the St. Marys market since June of 2020. Before then, I was a market vendor here back in 2008 until 2013. I am here to ask questions and make suggestions for the market.

Local markets are becoming plentiful and a favorite thing to do for many people traveling or day tripping. Our area is no different. As vendors we have become ambassadors for the city. We share our knowledge about the area with the people who visit our booths every Saturday. Every single week we suggest local establishments for dining and shopping, Cumberland Island, and other local areas of interest. Many of us even put our earned money back into the community by shopping and eating locally as well.

Market Coordinator/Assistant

We need a Market Coordinator- Someone who is present on market days (I am always there), make connections with vendors weekly to ensure they are planning to attend the market for the weekend (I do this too), network with potential new vendors (I do that as well), advertise (I also do this via Facebook), keep up with payments and attendance, sign up new vendors, and coordinate the event weekly as it should be with a full market. We really need a market coordinator for these tasks. I am willing and desire to be that person, even if only on a volunteer basis.

Vendors- (New, Full time, and Part time)

People wishing to become a new vendor are calling and repeatedly being told that we are full or being placed on a waiting list, when most weekends we are only at half capacity and sometimes even less. A full market would really help to bring more people downtown on a Saturday morning.

This is where I propose full-time vendors and part-time vendors. Since it is required for the vendors to participate in at least two weekends a month, but not every weekend a month, then I suggest that we have a set of vendors for the first half of the month, and another set the second half for those who can't commit to every weekend. Or have the part timers select their two weekends in advance and then place other vendors who are on the "wait list" in the absent weekends as availability arises. Again, this is where a market coordinator is useful. Full-time vendors would be every weekend with a designated permanent space. There can be differential fees for both types of vendors.

First Friday

Can we (the St. Marys Community Market Vendors), set up on First Fridays in our usual area for a nominal fee to those who attend? Again, the market coordinator could structure the spaces for the registered participants from the Community market who are able to attend. Having a market on the evenings of First Friday (weather permitting) would be an additional enticement for people to come out to shop and eat downtown.

Farms

I am not sure why there are no Georgia Farms from the surrounding area that are willing to bring produce to our market, but we desperately need produce and many visitors become disappointed when there is none. It could be a once-a-month thing added to one of our Saturdays if we could get just one farm to come and sell their produce. Can we get in touch with some of the local area farms and see if we can get them on board for having them come be a part of the market?

In closure many of my questions or concerns go unanswered or unresolved so these are my ideas and requests. This market could be so much more than it is and therefore, bring more people to our downtown.